3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

growth of the jungle are cut away from time to time around these palms, and about once a year, usually on the occasion of harvesting leaves for a thatch, the crown of leaves is trimmed. Any drooping dead leaves at the base of the crown are thrown away and the thoroughly mature healthy leaves only are selected for the thatch. Thus there remain at the center of this crown a number of young and more tender leaves which serve the needs of the plant itself and prevent damage to it which might otherwise arise from the loss of the mature leaves. 245

The tagua is a low-growing species of palm, the upper end of the stem, from which the leaves spring, rarely exceeding sixteen feet above the ground. The leaves are therefore easily gathered by means of a short ladder. This, combined with the fact that the tagua produces a very good quality of leaf, makes it almost the only species used for permanent thatch. While several other species of palm produce leaves of durable quality, they grow to such height that it is not expedient in most cases to gather the leaves except by cutting down the palm itself. [824]

The tagua leaves, which reach an average length of about fourteen feet, have stout leaflets extending from the midrib at an angle of perhaps seventy degrees and for a distance of about three feet on each side of the midrib. To prepare the leaves for use, they are split in two along their midribs. Four of these half-leaves are then laid together so that the natural under-surfaces of the leaflets all face the same direction and the midribs are tied together with pitigua at two points. 314 342

3: Barrett E-5 (1908-1909)1925
SD6 Cayapa SD6

342 A platform of bamboo is next constructed at an
[349] elevation of two or three feet from the ground. The
314 split green leaves, prepared as above, are then placed on this platform and a thatch built over and around them so as to protect them completely from the weather. This is done usually at the place where the leaves are cut, probably more as a matter of convenience than for any other reason, since the leaves when green are very heavy but on drying become very light. They are allowed to season here for at least two months, after which they are transported to the point where they are to be used. In some cases, however, the freshly cut leaves are transported at once to the house for which they are intended and there cured.

This seasoning in a dry place is absolutely necessary, since if the leaves were placed on the roof while still green, the constant rains of this region would soon rot
[825] them. It is further claimed that if used when green they are soon attacked by insects, especially cockroaches, which, as before mentioned, are very numerous and troublesome.

342 The negroes also use the tagua-leaf to a large extent
177 for thatch, and in its preparation they are very strict in their observance of certain rules concerning the phases of the moon. No timber may be felled and no thatch leaves cut in the light of the moon. In the case of timber, it is claimed that it is both subject to the attacks of insects and is rendered much more likely to break or split in working if cut in the light of the moon than if cut in the dark of the moon. Likewise thatch

423
685

recently been planted without permission by the Cimarrón brothers of Encanto. Ciro and his brother were angry, but said nothing until they became drunk at a party at the home of Gabriel. Harsh words were exchanged, but Gabriel settled the case. He decided that the Cimarrón brothers could use the land for five years without any cost, but then the land would revert to Ciro and his brother, Santiagueño. Ciro did not like the decision and pointed out that the land would have to remain fallow for five years so that he would lose its use for ten years. There were about twenty-five rubber trees on the land, Ciro said, and if the trees were tapped by the Cimarrón brothers he would take the case, not to the /únʸi/, but to the authorities at Limones.

[648]

The Cimarrón brothers claimed that the land did not belong to Ciro and Santiagueño. Ciro claimed that the land belonged to his father. The major issue lay in the fact that Ciro and his brother did not plant crops, but only tapped the rubber trees. Rubber tapping per se involves very little work, and no clearing of bush. It cannot be equated with the work of clearing and planting the land, weeding, and harvesting. Ciro's

[314
240]